

Activity Tips To Try With Your Children

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What do your children spend their free time on the weekends and after school doing? Do they go out and play with their friends or other family members? Do you take them to the park to play on swings, ride their bikes, roller blade or skateboard? OR do they spend long hours watching television and playing computer games?

Just as New Zealand adults are becoming overweight, so are our children. Various researches have shown that up to one third of New Zealand children are overweight. Overweight children become overweight adults. Obesity in New Zealanders and people all over the world is the biggest contributor to health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and some cancers.

Convenience and saving time are becoming the most important ways to do everything in our busy lives. Both adults and children further rely on services and devices which reduce physical activity, such as lifts, escalators, remote control garage doors, televisions, videos, internet shopping and take-away food home delivery, which all reduce the amount of physical activity we all do. Research also shows that the average child around the world watches between 20-30 hours of television each week.

Physical activity is the biggest provider of maintaining a healthy body weight and that is why it is vital to get your children active.

Children are often quite happy doing activities; they just need some more ideas. It is important that all physical activity for your children is positive and fun so that they are not discouraged from doing it at such a young age. For example, if your child is not co-ordinated with catching a ball, it is very important for you to keep encouraging them to practice this skill but in a soothing environment, rather than in a competitive team environment such as netball or basketball.

'Activity' does not have to involve your child playing a structured sport, but it is important that your children are given encouragement and the opportunity to participate if they choose. To discover what sport opportunities are in your area go to your local library, community centre or go to your child's school for information. In addition you could contact us here at GetKidsActive.com for more information on sporting opportunities in your area.

Finding the right sport for your child will require some patience and commitment but it will be worth it in the end. In addition to preventing weight problems, children can learn several key life skills from being part of a team. Your child will learn discipline, coordination, communication skills, team work and might grow a passion for their chosen sport that will continue into their adult life. Movement and exercise also helps to decrease feelings of stress which are common during the growth of your child. Children can meet friends through getting involved in team environments.

By encouraging your child to be active from a young age you are setting a precious lifestyle for them for the future. Children are, of course, encouraged by people who are close to them. If you are also active then your children will observe that activity and sport is not just for kids! Set a good example for your children! Walk instead of driving to the shops at every opportunity; take the stairs instead of the lift; and organise social meetings with friends which include activity such as tennis or squash.

There are unlimited ways to encourage activity for children. Many ways can involve the whole family. For instance:

Â· If school is within walking distance walk with your child to school instead of driving them.

Â· Take your children to the beach and take a cricket set down as well as things they enjoy such as a Frisbee, volleyball and a tennis ball to throw around.

Â· Take the dog for a walk.

Â· Do some gardening and build a vegetable garden which the children can help look after.

Â· Visit your local swimming pool, outdoors in summer and indoor in winter.

Â· Visit the local park or take a rugby ball down to kick around.

Â· Go for a bike ride and find some favourite spots for a picnic stop.

Â· Find out about your local area and organise a bush walk in the hills or out of your city.

Â· Search for places that involve walking, maybe visit the zoo or a museum.

Â· Take part in community walks or bike rides if you ever hear of them in your area.

Â· Choose presents for children that encourage activity. Kites, outdoor equipment, gift vouchers to outdoor activity parks/canoe hire/roller skating.

Finding activities that are fun and stimulating are the key. Both the children and the adults forget the effort involved in performing the activity when it is something they all enjoy.